

A SINGER IN
THE OUTER COURT





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"A SINGER IN THE OUTER COURT."

"Lord, place me in Thy Concert ; give one strain
To my poor reed !"

—G. HERBERT.

A COLLECTION OF SONGS AND VERSES.

BY

ALICE F. BARRY.

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INTRODUCTION.

You bid me write you flowing, measured rhyme,
In which each word plays its distinctive part—
Minor or major—in the steady chime
That it may be sweet music to your heart ;

That you may say, “I hold the silken clue
To all this maze of words—from fiercest fires
The clearest flames arise, and these burn too—
See what a poem such a thought inspires !”

But this I cannot do; beneath your gaze,
To open thus the lily, leaf by leaf,
And show its golden heart of many rays,
Would be the wanton labour of a thief.

And, even if I would, I could not write
The feeling underlying every word ;
And you could never read my song aright,
Or understand its echo if you heard.

The fairest pearls are those that deepest lie,
Escaping still the diver's grasping hand ;
The great sea hides its best from mortal eye,
But daily writes its shallow lines in sand.

The lark's sweet utterance makes us vainly long
To understand the secret of each tone,
Because the theme and triumph of her song—
Her nest—lies open to her eye alone.

You rightly say that, for a poem to move
The souls of those who read, it must be true ;
Sham ecstasies will never touch, nor prove
The excellence they fain would bring to view.

But the pure flame is hidden that inspires,
And must remain so, far beyond our powers
To rend the veil that dims its dazzling fires,
Or show to other hearts the light in ours.

Even in this I cannot make you feel

What I would fain express—I risk contempt :

No poet yet could all his thought reveal,

From misconstruction none is quite exempt.

But I will write you verses, if you will,

Which you may read and understand in part ;

They are the words that clothe my thought, but still

The *poem* lies unuttered in my heart.

FORTUNE.

(DESIGN FOR A PICTURE.)

THE children play at Dame Fortune's knees,
And cling to each out-stretched hand,
Gazing with awe in her deep blue eyes,
That smile like a sunny land ;
And the grass is green, and bright with flowers,
And the years fly, like a few short hours,
O'er the heads of the happy band.

The youths and maidens at Fortune's side
Worship that profile fair—
The tender mouth, and high, white brow,
And tresses of wandering hair—
Lingering there with unwilling feet,
Knowing and feeling the vision sweet
To be nothing but rainbow air !

While the old, who have passed Dame Fortune by,
And the gifts her hand confers,
Cast many a warning look and cry
At her lingering worshippers.
A few, perchance, may think with a smile
Of Fortune's gifts they enjoyed awhile,
But many will thank her never.
They find, in the light of the closing day,
That, seen from behind, her hair is grey,
And her back is turned for ever !

SONNET.

I.

ENSHROUDED in a twilight reverie

She stands—surrounded by a spectral train

Of old-time relics, marked by dusk and stain.

Lifting a lid, all carvèd curiously,

She plays—and yellow keys ring melody.

Forgotten harmonies awake again

That, silent, long within her heart have lain,

Sounds that refresh her withered memory . . .

. . . A tiny maid, she danced to that same air,

The time well marked by the professor's chords,

Her dainty toes reflected in the boards,

Each step completed with elaborate care. . . .

Where lay the music that has burst its bands,

In silent instrument, or passive hands ?

SONNET.

II.

For, separate, they both were powerless—

The woman's heart reserved, and well-nigh cold,

The instrument despised, forgotten, old,—

Neither with means their music to express

To let in light upon their loneliness ;

Until the moment came, when fold on fold

Fell from the timid heart, and left it bold

To wander in the memories that should bless.

A touch unites the two, a secret spring

Unseals the torrent, and, the one with tears,

The other with the echo of past years,

Meet, heart to heart, and so break forth and sing.

Henceforth, the cloud of silence fled away,

Light shines upon the past and present day.

A SUNSET.

YESTERE'EN the clouds were heavy,
Sea and sky of one dull grey,
But I saw a break to westward,
And the curtain drawn away,
Till the edges of the storm-clouds
Caught a red, reflected light—
Red that melted into golden,
As the sun burst into sight !

Steeped in momentary glory,
Earth lay smiling through her tears,
As, on some dear friend's arrival,
Flee our selfish doubts and fears,
And we smile to think how faithless,
And short-sighted we have been,
Once to doubt that constant friendship,
Even though unfelt—unseen.

Brief, however, was the splendour
Round the death-bed of the sun ;
And the clouds, like tearless mourners,
Gathered closer, one by one,
Clinging silently together,
And not daring to complain,
Till the light died,—then their weeping,
Unrestrained, broke forth again.

THE FIRST OF MAY.

JUST as the night was paling
 Into the morn,
And the fair earth, unveiling,
 Smiled at the dawn,
Far beyond park and railing
 And well-kept lawn,
I have been gladly hailing
 Blossoms new-born.

Why did I wake so early?—
 Can you not guess?
Think of the date—I surely
 Need not confess
I have been out to gather
 Mid-summer snow;
How the fair gift came hither
 She need not know.

Blue eyes down by the river
Misty with dew,
A lark's song sped me thither,
Down where they grew—
Cowslips, and golden king-cups
Burnished bright,
And, above all, sweet hawthorn—
Buds pearly-white.

See, I will lay my burden
Down at her door,
Her glad surprise my guerdon,
What need I more?
She will come forth, unconscious,
Greeting the day,
On to the flower-strewn threshold—
Hush! come away!

SONNET.

* His wife in silent anguish kneels beside,
Too sorrowful for tears, too cold for prayer,
With the soft cloud of her abundant hair
Straying uncared for—once his boasted pride.
Oh ! woman's glory, brought thus deadly low !
Her eyes are still too dim to gaze above—
To tend the soul-less body of her love
Is now the only solace in her woe.
She feels the hardness of his narrow bed,
And, with sharp scissors, severs every tress,
So proudly worn beneath his dear caress,
To raise and pillow the beloved head,
If haply it may find as soft a rest
As in her arms, and on her loving breast.

* R. Wagner (died Feb. 13th, 1883).

FAITH.

THE news had come—his little friend had gone

Away across the sea for many years ;

My little son was now left quite alone—

All day he struggled manfully with tears.

But when, at night, I drew him to my side,

And tried to comfort him, his grief found vent,

And broke down all the barriers of his pride.

I told him of the message she had sent,

The certain promise of return “some day” ;

The little present made before she went,

In memory of “how they used to play.”

He listened sadly, silently intent.

My own experience failed to soothe the child ;

I spoke of friends returned, and time-healed pain,

And thought to still his grief with accents mild,—

When “ Dear,” he cried, “ I ought not to complain :

If I am good, and she is good," he smiled,

“We're sure to meet in Heaven and play again.”

Aye, with a child-like faith, “to play again”—

If old or weary, to be young once more,

Nothing to fear, to doubt, or to explain,

But all to be between them as before.

My thought had failed beyond all time to soar ;

My child's had passed through Heaven's very door

A RAINY DAY.

GLOOM, and shadow, and sorrow,
And misery, clouds, and rain ;
 And the drops stream in,
 Like a subtle sin,
At the sick man's broken pane :
And he, with the sad eyes, lying
 Stretched on his poor weak back,
Watches his daughter trying
 In vain to stop the crack.

Rain is sweet in the meadows,
Pattering on the trees,
 And the dairy-maid
 Runs under their shade,
Her hair all loose in the breeze ;
But down in the smoky valley,
 With the houses clustering round,

Pouring on court and alley,
Rain has a weary sound.

“What will it be to-morrow?”

The poor wife said last night ;

“Another wet day—

No work, no pay,

And the children growing white.

If only the sun were shining,”

And she lifts her drooping head :

“Men talk of a silver lining,

That silver won't buy bread.”

But she hushes the children's wailing

With, “Father'll soon be well ;

He wouldn't shirk

If he got the work,

As all his mates could tell :

'Twill come to-morrow, maybe ;

'Tis well, as people say,

What with him sick, and baby,

I saved for a *rainy day*.”

Pray for the sun, little children,

Look up into the sky ;

 The clouds are past,

 And a gleam at last

Breaks like a smile of joy.

Into the heart despairing

 A brighter light has shone,

And father smiles, declaring,

 “ The rain is over and gone.”

And the tender sky is fairer,

And the scents of earth more sweet,

 For a rainy day

 Doth wash away

Impurities out of the street :

And father's heart sees clearer

 Out of his tear-washed eyes,

And a rainy day, seen nearer,

 Is a blessing in disguise.

TWO GARDENS.

(A SONG.)

I KNOW of two fair gardens—
The one is full of flowers
That flourish in the sunshine,
And grow beneath the showers ;

The other is devoted
To one grand, stately tree,
Beneath whose shade a carpet
Of moss lies pleasantly.

Woe to the nurtured blossoms,
Crushed down by snow and rain
Barren and cold the garden,
Till spring returns again.

Then storms are all forgotten,
And, brighter than before,
The flowers it loved and cherished,
Bloom out again once more.

But weep for that fair garden
Where storm brings deeper woe,
Its idol once uprooted,
No other plants will grow.

Rent is its verdant garment,
Cold falls the pitiless rain,
Low lies its crown and glory,
And spring returns in vain.

LISZT.

HONOUR the noble features of the man who stands
Reaping his tardy meed of praise at England's hands,
Acknowledging to-day his widely-echoed name,
And bent beneath the double weight of age and fame,
With hair that falls like sea-foam round a rock, and
eyes

Full of all native grace, and Christian courtesies,
Gazing—his own life's labour well and nobly done—
With genial pride upon his pupil's well begun.

Honour the gift, God's worthy gift, of holy fire,
That can dull wood and brass with soul and voice
inspire ;

That with life-giving touch on ivory keys can raise
The listening soul on mighty wings of joy and praise.
Honour the heart that hath conceived, the hand that
wrote

Such music as among the stars of Heaven may float ;

But honour most, what few men know, th' unselfish
deed *

Which angels in the blessed Register may read :

How, for another's glory he laid by his own,
Content to see his brother reap where both had sown,
And win men's praise, unshared, till death did seal
his ears.

Was it for late reward that God prolonged his years,
That he might see his work received and crowned at
last,

Knowing that for his friend, the world's applause was
past?

We cannot tell. Truly, a great musician he,
One of the greatest that the world will ever see,
But in the record of his greatness let it stand—

“In honour he preferred another”—*that* was grand.

* It is said that Liszt and Berlioz each composed a march upon the same theme. Liszt was content to put aside his own, and it was only after Berlioz' death that he was persuaded to publish it, when his composition received a far greater ovation than that of his friend.

SONNET.

(TO C.E.G.P.)

JUST such a Child on Mary's gentle knee
Did cling and coax with that same winning grace,
Hiding upon her virgin breast the face
Beneath Whose glance the spheres make harmony.
Small, feeble hands clasped hers as restlessly,
And eyes, that seemed the problem vast to trace,
Unlimited to nature, time, or space,
Gazed thus, but with a deeper mystery.
Just such a Child, the weakness of a child
For ever hallowing—oh ! wondrous thought !
I thank Thee, Lord of souls thus undefiled,
For glimpses of my God so nearly brought,
Making the care of "these the least of Thine"
A joy untold, a privilege divine.

STORY OF A LIFE.

YES, I am “hardened”; you may speak of her
now,

’Tis so long ago—

So many years have set the mark on my brow

Of their ebb and flow ;

So many fingers have met and grasped my own,

Since her little hand

Loosed its clinging, and lay like a little stone,

At Death’s command—

Fell down out of mine on her quiet breast,

As a frozen wren

Flutters and falls on the cold, deserted nest.

So long since then !

You thought I should shrink to speak of my little
one—

Nay, you were wrong.

Her name makes all trouble and pain seem over and gone—

The waiting less long.

Once, it is true, I buried my grief in my heart,

Hid it away ;

But I have shared it since with others in part,

And learnt to pray.

Sir, I am loving God through the power of her love :

This was the end

The Lord had in view, when He called her spirit above—

My little God-send!

Ah ! she was beautiful, sir, my little child,

As she lay dead ;

Doctor and all admired her—I almost smiled

To hear it said.

They called her “a lovely statue of marble—of clay” ;

But in my eyes,

With the bright, warm life, true beauty had vanished away,

Like sunset skies,

Which, while the sun still burns, glow crimson and
gold,

In the far West,

But, when he sinks, turn suddenly pale and cold,

His loss confess'd. . . .

This was her hair—you have listened, now you may
look,

Let it lie there

Over the speech of the prodigal son in my Book.

Pretty brown hair !

Ah ! when I cut it—twining the curl round so—

My darling said :

“Cut it all, father. Makes me so hot, you know,

Lying in bed.”

Poor little feet, so patient and still “in bed,”

Never to run

Lightly over the fields, where the buttercups
spread,

Types of the sun !

Poor little restless head, so weary of pain !

Oft have ye risen

Up in a waking dream, again and again,

Before me in prison !

How did I come there? What, do you want the
tale

Of a poor man's fall?

Nothing unusual, nothing to turn you pale—

Nothing at all—

Only the stroke of a pen, one name for another,

To bring us in bread,

When all were starving,—genteelly,—children and
mother,—

And Maggie nigh dead.

Ah! how the crisp notes mocked me! The gold rang
true—

But the sky grew dark:

God judge the cause, as He will most surely do,

Of the London clerk!

She made me promise—Maggie, who little knew

How deep my stain—

And held, to listen, the last breath that she drew:

“See you again?”

How the words echoed—the last my darling
spoke—

Rang in my ears

All through the day, when my spirit finally broke ;

All through the years

Parted, by worse than death, from children and
wife,

And desolate home ;

All through the weary toil of my prison life,

My living tomb !

Ask the chaplain, sir—you know him—what I was
then,

Sullen and cowed,

But raging at times like a sore beast in its den,

Hopelessly loud,

Till one day he warned me of God Whom I defied,

And judgment to come.

“ Don’t tell me I shan’t see Maggie again,” I cried,

And he stood dumb ;

Then my hands fell down, and my knees gave way at
last,

And without a word

I knew, and he knew, that my bitterest hour was
past,

And his prayers heard.

Thank God with me, sir, he was my true, good
friend—

He shared my cross,
And broke to me gently my poor wife's patient
end—

Her gain—my loss.
When I came out, to live on the hope he had
given,

He helped me still—
Such men as he are angels, “on earth, as in
Heaven,

Doing God's will.”
Now you have heard my story—God bless you,
sir,

I never forget—
Pshaw ! I'm a fool !—these tears don't fall for
her—

Not “hardened” yet !

MY LITTLE ANGEL.

THERE is a little angel,
With dazzling, snow-white wings,
Who stands among the others
Before the Lord, and sings.

'Tis quite a baby-angel,
With rounded, childish face,
Pure as her little garment
That bears no earthly trace.

Once she came down from Heaven,
To stay with me awhile,
She learnt to call me "mother,"
And greet me with a smile.

But God, Who loved her better,
 Called her from sin and pain,
And one December morning
 She went away again.

Sometimes, when hope is weary,
 And earth is very near,
When clouds have shut out Heaven,
 And only sin looks clear,

Then, in the growing darkness,
 I feel those baby eyes
Rest lovingly upon me
 In wistful, sad surprise.

I feel those tiny fingers
 Close gently upon mine,
And place them, clinging feebly,
 Within the Hand Divine.

Sometimes, when life is hardest,
 Made up of doubts and fears,
I kneel at God's own table
 And look up through my tears,

And there, behind the altar,
I see two figures stand,
My little angel clinging
To Jesus' outstretched hand—

Until my faith grows stronger,
In the faithfulness of One,
Who will let me join my angel
When all my work is done.

When Death is sent to fetch me,
God, in His tender love,
Will let my little angel
Come with Him from above.

I shall not fear the journey
To that far-distant land,
Death and my little angel
Will take me by the hand.

There will be no more parting
When we have gained that shore,
And I, among the angels,
May worship and adore.

ONE.

BE not disheartened—one among the throng
Paused, little bird, to listen to thy song.
Be not disheartened—one through the shower
Saw and admired thy beauty, little flower.
Be not disheartened, swiftly flowing stream ;
Most count thy murmurs portion of a dream,—
Few though the hearts thy message seems to reach,—
One learnt the lesson thou must ever teach.
Be not disheartened, nobly spreading tree,
They who were dancing thought not of thee,
But when thy shelter was most unrepaid,
One, looking up, was grateful for thy shade.
Be not disheartened, thou who with thy pen
Canst at thy will draw tears or smiles from men :
Few though the eyes that see thy deeper signs,
One pair, at least, has read between the lines.

Be not disheartened, thou who canst paint
Saintly expression in the eyes of a saint,
If, in the crowd of those who coldly stare,
One of the gazers has drifted into prayer.
Be not disheartened, thou who canst awake
Music unearthly as that which angels make,
For, in the ebbing of Fashion's careless tide,
One soul was raised to Heaven and satisfied.
And thou who hast spoken, deeming all in vain,
Weary and daunted—rise refreshed again :
Be not disheartened—one of those who heard,
Honours and cherishes that very word.

SONNET.

(“THE WATER-COLOUR.”)

My Father, the great Artist, on a day
Supplied me with materials from his store—
Brushes and paints, and all I needed more—
And bade me lovingly my skill essay.
So I began to sketch what in me lay
With youthful eagerness ; and, longing sore
To imitate the Copy set before,
Did hastily add colours, crude and gay.
Oh ! then what glaring faults I first descried—
Past remedy ! My confidence gave way,
My tears rushed down in overwhelming tide
And blotted all the cause of my dismay ;
And now, in spite of will, desire, or pride,
My Picture is a monotone of grey.

SONNET.

(DAN. XII. 3.)

PASSED, without word or sign, as some bright star,
Following eternal laws, slips from its place,
Leaving behind a doubly darkened space,
Where late I dreamt Heaven's gateway stood ajar.
Such a dark stain my zenith well might mar,
Such a deep rent, the angels' starry lace,
If it were not that I can dimly trace,
By constant, wistful gazing from afar,
Faint lesser lights appearing to those eyes
That bear to probe what God in love has riven.
I shall not see another planet rise,
But to my soul the promise has been given,
Some day my vanished saint to recognise,
Shining a brighter star in God's new Heaven.

THE BIRD-SELLER.

(AN ALLEGORY.)

I HAVE stood in the streets the whole day long,
And now turn homewards at evensong.
The time is past, I may hide away,
Nobody wants my bird to-day.

Strange the ware that I have to sell,
A poor little bird that sings so well
That the King himself might deem it a prize—
But they all pass by with averted eyes.

I have watched till my hopes are fallen dead.
And yet I must sell my bird for bread ;
I grieve at the loss, but alas ! the gain
Is the only thing to ease my pain.

My bird must go, if I wish to live,
For he is all that I have to give ;
Have pity, kind friends, and hear him sing,
Then you will offer me anything !

But they will not stop ; they are, one and all,
Too busy to hear my pleading call ;
Come, little friend, in this weary noise
They do not care for your humble voice.

They are losing the blessed antidote
For the deepest grief in your gentle note ;
There's not a woe in the world to-day
That it could not soothe or take away.

There's a charm in the song of my little bird,
But none believe it who have not heard ;
Surely some of your souls are grieved—
Pause ! and listen, and be relieved !

They will not—nobody turns aside,
Out of the throbbing, hurrying tide ;
Day after day, I plead in vain—
Come, little bird, we must home again.

My strength is failing, my steps are weak,
My tears would flow if I tried to speak;
Once more to my room I creep away,
Nobody wants my bird to-day.

MORS—MORTUA.

ALAS ! what skill have I, that I should paint her ?

My thoughts are full of what she might have been,

As I look down upon my soulless queen,

Lying here dead.

Aye, and my past is all too full of her

To realise a future void and drear.

This cannot be my lady lying here,

Her spirit fled.

This—clad in shapeless white, her I have known

Full of all warmth and light, and love of light ?

This—lying in a strange and silent night,

The sun shut out ?

Why, I have waited breathless by our gate,

Leaning against the oak tree, day by day,

And heard her horse's footfall far away

Dispel my doubt ;

And watched her drawing nearer, step by step,
Sometimes alone, sometimes the friend beside
With whom my lady oftentimes did ride,
And pass me by,
Not dreaming that I feasted on her face,
And held my eager breath lest she should turn
And with displeasure my near presence learn—
Hearing me sigh.

The level bars of light across her path
Broke and dissolved, and let her pass unstayed,
But, closing up behind, a barrier made
That none durst break.
So she would come, unconscious of my eyes,
The languid air, stirred into fuller life,
Bidding the poplar-spears in a mock strife
Their vengeance shake.

Shall I not rather paint her so? Not now,
Silent, stretch'd out, and motionless—and yet
(So the bereaved and widowed mother said)
“Paint me her *dead*.”

Then I have watched her sit, with parted lips,
Flushed cheeks, and lifted eyes, her beating heart
Following breathless the musicians' art,
To drama wed.

Or I have seen her, brightly clad and gay,
Standing within the porch on festa-nights,
Bidding her guests farewell—the glimmering lights
Behind her head

Like the gold background of a pictured saint,
Her shadow on the marble step below.
Ah ! what a picture ! But the words ran so—
“Paint me her *dead*.”

Alas ! they should have ordered it of one
Who knew her less, or not at all—not me ;
How can I paint Death's cold neutrality
Upon her face? . . .

Open those heavy eyes on me, my love,
Listen ! the time has come that thou shouldst know
How long in secret I have called thee so—
Grant me this grace !

But look upon me kindly—do not chide,—
Or, if thou wilt(—I know thee far above)—
Turn still to the sad story of my love
A heedless ear.

My queen! My love! For once I am so near
That I dare whisper those sweet words aloud . . .
. . . I do but dream—she lies there in her shroud—
Can the dead hear?

TYPES.

WHAT are the waves like, with their ceaseless roll,
Always breaking, always returning whole,
Each broken fragment gathered up once more
Into the next one thundering on the shore ?

(Time.)

Time breaks upon Earth's confines year by year,
And we, like pebbles, lying here and there,
Are slowly worn and polished, till some day
We silently roll down and pass away.

(Creation.)

Yet He Who lays each pebble in its place
Has called us, too, into a state of grace ;
The waves are types of His creative power
Which never ceaseth flowing hour by hour.

(*Prayer.*)

And each created soul doth recognise
The presence of that Power all-good, all-wise,
And to the "God unknown" or known doth pray,
With dim eyes turned towards the Light of Day.

(*Praise.*)

But when the silent gate of Heaven is past,
The sea will find its fullest type at last ;
The praise of the redeemed will break above,
Wave upon wave, into a sea of love.

FRIENDS.

WE had been speaking of the friends we knew—
She reckoned many, I, alas ! but few ;
Then prompted by a touch (I know not why,
Well as I loved her) of mean jealousy,
I spoke, and with the shock of sad surprise
Silenced the mild inquiry of her eyes.
“ Better the lesser number, tried and true—
Those who do love, than those who say they do.”
“ Why should you think my friends are insincere,”
She gently asked, “ because they hold me dear ?
I am not worthy, but I love to feel
That sympathy which goes so far to heal,
And, still more ” (with a quiver in her voice),
“ That in my welfare many hearts rejoice.
All are my friends, and all would gladly own
Their friendship. Some of these, indeed, have gone

Far out of sight and touch, but yet they send
Often a voiceless greeting to their friend
Across the sea, and bid her call to mind
The years and days (now left so far behind !)
Spent in each other's presence, and until
Which days and years come round on Fortune's wheel—
When wounds that Time hath made with Time shall
 heal—

And we may meet again—their love lives still ”
“ Aye, those,” I said ; “ but they are friends indeed.”
“ And I have more,” she said, “ for present need,
And close at hand.” My spirit rose again.
“ Acquaintances,” I said. She spoke with pain,
As one who still unwillingly contends—
“ Some love me more than others—all are friends.”
And then the dreamy look from the deep skies
Came down, and shut out sorrow from her eyes,
As she mused on : “ Some have been good to me—
Some I have seldom seen, some frequently.
Ah ! it is good to know so many souls,
Even so many faces ! When Time rolls
Into Eternity, around God's throne

Will shine all the dear faces we have known—
At least, I pray God have them in His keeping,
Safe from the outer darkness and the weeping.
Aye, just so many more to recognise,
Familiar tones to echo our surprise
And happiness—Ah, me ! what happiness !
For human friendship shall we love God less ?
Think of the joy late sorrows to compare,
To find out then what a far larger share
Than ours, which seemed so heavy, some did bear.
To hear that word, which we let fall one day
In sickening doubt of what we ought to say,
And fearing to withhold or to obtrude,
Repeated now with burning gratitude.
To hear one say, ‘ I had no friend, till thou
Didst lead me up to Dothan’s hilly brow,
Opened my eyes, and made me feel and see
God’s loving angels all surrounding me.’
And then to note each one’s experience
Of the sure working of God’s influence—
The gradual awaking of their faith
That stronger burnt, and stronger, till their death.

Death, too : that darkened gateway safely passed—
How shall we love that day men called ‘our last’ !
Why did they weep for us ? Why did we fear ?
Jesus had promised us He would be near,
And with a Shepherd’s care He led the way
Out of Earth’s darkness into Heaven’s day.
And so shall rise, in one great tidal-wave
Of thankfulness, small streams, beyond the grave
United, and with thundering majesty
Break, and dissolve into the boundless sea !
Heaven’s praise ! Earth’s feebler praise so far above.
As richer in the knowledge of God’s love,
Begun in human friendship, carried on,
And perfected at last before His throne ! ”
She ceased ; and, rising from the sheltered seat,
Our earlier refuge from the noon-day heat,
She left me hurriedly, and passed
Out of the shadows that the cedars cast,
Like a white spirit, out of mortal sight,
Into the outer ring of golden light.

WHEN I WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD.

LONG, long ago, my children,
A palace was my home,
With endless passages and halls,
Where one entrance'd might roam.
They say for scanty pounds, dears,
The land has since been sold—
But the garden had no bounds, dears,
When I was eight years old.

I had a tender lover,
As handsome as could be,
Who from my birth had known me,
And served me faithfully.

He came across the water,
From mountains drear and cold—
My great St. Bernard dog, dears,
When I was eight years old.

I had more children then, dears,
Than I can now call mine,
And some, alas! went shabby,
But most of them went fine.
They never thought me partial,
Or feared my love grown cold—
My twelve or thirteen dolls, dears,
When I was eight years old.

In summer I was happy,
And danced away the hours,
Nor knew how fast they flitted,
Among the birds and flowers.
And when the winter came, dears,
I loved the frost and cold—
All seasons were the same, dears,
When I was eight years old.

Now it is growing late, dears,
 We must away to bed,
My hair is turning grey, dears,
 'Tis time good-nights were said.
My youth revives in part, dears,
 Each time the tale is told—
I never had a heart, dears,
 When I was eight years old !

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON.

“Go forth, and break through all”—the charge that
 sped

 Sir Galahad of old upon his way,
And many more before and since—I read,
 And gave my hero also to obey.

Pure as the purest knight, as true as pure,
 And brave as he our England’s patron saint
Who trod the dragon—he whose name he bore—
 I saw him go, and did not cry or faint.

My one great aim that strengthened heart and
 voice—

 To be more worthy of his love and life :
Now came the test—I, his unworthy choice,
 Dared not withhold—I urged him to the strife.

He went. I marked the battle’s course with eyes
 That shone, and dimmed with tears, alternately ;

Sharp, stinging words, and poisonous replies
Flashed from the many-headed enemy.

He was alone : those watching held their breath—
He had a talisman beneath his shield ;
Not till the dragon's fire was quenched in death
Did he lay down his arms upon the field.

Then I might weep, and bathe his head and brow,
And draw the venom from his wounded breast ;
But he had fought on earth too hardly—now
He needed Heaven's sweet unbroken rest.

The gratitude and thanks, so dearly bought,
Of those who else had lived and died in fear
Came all too late ; the King for Whom he fought,
E'en He could not reward him fully here.

So it was yet my bitter fate to stand
And bid my hero rise from conquering.
“Go forth, and break through all”—Death's boundary-
land—
Till in the “spiritual city crowned King.”

SONNET.

(" FOLLOWING. ")

I.

As one who values life must take good heed
To follow closely up the mountain-way
The chosen guide, him meekly to obey,
And rest content that he alone should lead—
So would I follow thee in very deed
If Fate did order it, by night, by day,
Though Nature's self endeavoured to dismay—
And count thy smile a guerdon beyond need.
But harder far to follow where thy soul,
Outstripping all companions in the race,
Doth so speed onward to the blessed goal,
Mounting "with eagles' wings" "from grace to
grace."
Yet I would fain ascend with thee, my saint ;
God give me strength to follow and not faint.

SONNET.

(“FOLLOWING.”)

II.

It would be difficult to follow thee

O'er rocky cliffs, where eagles tear their prey,

Crowning unfathomed depths of misty grey ;

Or far across the cruel, restless sea ;

Or over deserts stretching endlessly :

Yet even that my spirit would essay,

And guide my willing members to obey,

Could I but know that thou wouldst welcome me.

But those were easy tasks and labour light

To this my daily care ; my soul would fain

Arise and follow thine to that great height

To which, God helping me, I will attain—

Yes, even I, at dawning of the Day,

Raised to thy side, perchance, shall praise and
pray.

THE LEGEND ALLEGORICAL.

A MAIDEN weary of the dance and song,
Between the clinging branches of the grove,
Light-footed and light-hearted, passed along
To where the land and water interwove,
As in the heart do mingle right and wrong—
The wavelets lay asleep, and dreamt of love.

Last night a sudden storm had racked the bay ;
The sea had far encroached,—but with the dawn
Retired again as far, and drawn away
The fringe of sand it had so rudely torn,
Disclosing rocks, like hidden sins, that lay
In their grim nakedness as newly-born.

But every trace of fury had dissolved
Beneath the morning's smile ; the maiden's eyes

From east to west with lingering gaze revolved,
And took fresh colour from the deeper skies,
Then sank again, as modestly resolved
The very sun himself to tantalise.

What is that gleam of whiteness at her feet?
Her very robe looks dull that shone before !
Whose is that sculptured face so wondrous sweet?
A marble figure lies upon the shore,
But half concealed th' enraptured gaze to meet—
Their prize the waves unwillingly restore.

Nearer the maiden crept, and, half in fear,
Half breathless with delight, did gaze her fill ;
Stooping, with tender hands she tried to clear
The seaweed that defied her, clinging still ;
Then tried to raise the mighty head, but here
Her strength was not obedient to her will.

She could have wept to see the noisome sand
Clogging the parted lips and waving hair ;
She dipped the water in her slender hand
And bathed, till all the face was pure and fair,

Then pulled her garment from its loosened band
And dried each feature with a reverent care.

But now the friendly light began to fade ;
With startled look, the maiden raised her head,—
Then, with a quick resolve to seek for aid
To lift the statue from its rocky bed,
One lingering tribute of respect she paid,
And, turning, through the olives homeward sped.

That night a guard was set ; and when the morn
Declared the maiden's tale no fantasy,
The marble statue was upraised, and borne
Inland, and further from the jealous sea.
There, in her father's woods, the boughs were shorn
To form a bower of fragrant privacy.

A screen of flowering thorns in circle grew,
And hedged the sacred precincts round about ;
And there, safe sheltered from the common view,
The maiden, knowing neither fear nor doubt,
Nor joy, and heedless of the hours that flew,
Worshipped her statue—all the world shut out.

Days passed ; the maiden grew more deathly white,—

Her parents sought to rouse her, but in vain ;

Her comrades held her once with playful might,

But yielded at her piteous moan of pain ;

Each day she slipped away, until the night

Descending, turned her footsteps home again.

At last the mother, with an aching heart,

Gave orders that the grove should be destroyed,

When next the love-sick maiden stole apart

Her idol's sanctuary should be void—

And thus to sacrifice the purest art

A band of men were secretly employed.

And still the maid kept silence ; with the dawn

She hied away once more with faltering feet,

And, pushing through the hedge of flowering thorn,

She safely entered her beloved retreat,

Then, weary, sank upon the velvet lawn

In ecstasy half painful and half sweet.

Her eyes devoured anew the passive face,

Her spirit, racked with love's consuming pain,

Each detail of the god-like form did trace

In all its purity from worldly stain.

Rising, she moved still nearer to embrace—

But staggered back, and fell to earth again. . . .

A branch of fir had hitherto concealed

A portion of the statue's marble breast,—

This veiling torn aside, there lay revealed

A gaping wound no surgery had dressed—

Whence flowed no blood, but dew in slime congealed,

And staining moss between the cracks that pressed.

Purity's self impurity did breed !

Oh ! horrid flaw, to mar such virgin stone !

Oh ! broken heart, that felt no pain indeed,

But caused an injury deeper than thine own !

Well may the bosom of the priestess bleed—

A deity has fallen from his throne !

* * * * *

Unknowing that the maid had sped before,

With ready weapons and with stealthy tread,

The men had followed from her mother's door,
And by that mother to the grove were led—
Intruders broke the thorny hedge once more
And entered ; all was silent as the dead.

The statue, with one hand outstretch'd to greet,
Smiled on in conscious beauty undismayed ;
None marked that smile, how fair it was, how
sweet,—
Their glance had fallen lower and there stayed ;
For, white and still, across the marble feet,
Lifeless and broken-hearted lay the maid.

MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER.

I CANNOT sing to-night—I am not gay ;
My heart is heavy—why, I hardly know ;
Perhaps the shadow of another's woe
Darkens my sunshine, drives my smiles away.

“ We are all members ”—if the heart rejoice,
Shall not the head and hand be joyful too ?
And if one member suffer, is't not true
And right that one, at least, should lower his voice

So pardon me my silence for to-night ;
The veil is thick, the glass is dark between,
We cannot see what waiting, absence mean,
Till certainty shall come with morning light.

Perhaps (in earthly sense) that all is well,
And the bright sun will chase away my fears ;
Perhaps—God knows—that he will need my tears ;
Until the morning breaks I cannot tell.

“We are all one”—when Heaven makes that clear,
And we look back on earth—if he should say,
“One human spirit helped me day by day,
And in my grief became my comforter—

I felt the strength of human sympathy,
Supporting me, though *whose* remained unknown,
For (saving God) I deemed myself alone”—
Then I will say, “*My* spirit wept with thee.”

AUTUMN.

Lo ! Autumn in the world outside my heart,
 With sunset-coloured flowers, and mourning trees ;
 A solemn pause,—filled full of memories
Of that sweet Summer I have watched depart.

The birds have sung their farewell symphony—
 The chorus losing volume note by note
 Till the clear treble from the robin's throat
Alone sustains the broken harmony.

Mist settles on the hills—as the dim veil
 Of death descends upon the much-loved face,
 Preceding the dark night that creeps apace—
Turning the very blue of Heaven pale.

The latent sorrow in all lovely things
Makes itself felt, and, through the peaceful air,
At times, a sudden rush of fierce despair
Passes,—and dies away on rustling wings. . . .

'Tis Autumn in the heart within my breast,
Where Summer birds have sung, where flowers
have shone
Bright to the very last,—now all are gone,
And the sharp winds of grief have sunk to rest.

The mellow sunset fades into the night,
And night is chilly with the Winter's breath,—
All seasons are the Lord's—Come night ! Come
death !
Come Winter, with thy snow, and make me white !

FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE.

(A SONG.)

FRIENDSHIP and Love are near akin—

But this great difference I find,
That Love with bandaged eyes is seen,
While Friendship ne'er was painted blind.

If thou must fight with beasts of prey

Love, trembling, thrusts herself between ;—
But Friendship stands to watch the fray
With eye and ear alert and keen—

Ready to cheer thy wandering eye,

Fresh weapons in thy hand to place,
To praise the well-earned victory,
And all thy wounds anoint with grace.

If thou art crushed by bitter grief,
Love weeps with thee and shares thy pain,
But Friendship bids thee find relief
In taking up thy work again.

If thou hast sinned, Love would conceal
The fault from all (perchance from thee)
Friendship will tenderly reveal
It to thine own sincerity.

One day, beyond Death's boundary-line,
Friendship and Love shall wedded be,
And each fair grace with each combine
In a most perfect unity.

S O N N E T.

(“HARVEST.”)

I.

“GLORY to God,” the farmer cries, at sight
Of his broad fields of heavy-headed corn,
That falls like golden rain on harvest-morn,
And lies across the land like streaks of light ;
Rewarded now for many an anxious night,
He lays him down in peace, no longer torn
By sickening doubts—the earth her fruit has
borne,—
And sleep is sweet, and all his dreams are bright.
. . . And thou, who with a weary, longing gaze
Upon thine unripe fields, dost pray for sun—
Listen ! the triumph-song is now begun
Of angels, who in Heaven give God the praise :
And lo ! the time of harvest cometh on ;
Already God declares thy work well done.

SONNET.

(" HARVEST. ")

II.

" THEN comes the end "—our eyes unveiled shall see
What mind of man hath never yet conceived,
And those who through all trials have believed
At length shall penetrate all mystery.
" Glory to God " shall ring unceasingly
Over the fields of Heaven, while, bound and
sheaved,
The golden grain is joyfully received,
And stored within the gates of ivory.
. . . Then shall thy soul rejoice, as thou dost stand,
Watching, with burning eyes, the long array
Of saints, who as the stars in number shine ;
And, from the blessed crowd at Christ's right hand
Some white-robed spirit shall draw near, and say,
" *I am thy harvest,—the good God's, and thine.*"

MUSIC.

My friend and I do sit apart—alone—
 A sea of living human hearts between,
 Each with its load of joy or grief unseen,
Sending vibrations up to Heaven's throne.
Each more or less bowed down with toil and care—
 The happiest touched by some anxiety ;
 But thou and I are plunged in reverie,
And have forgotten who we are, or where—
What heed we of the silent, listening throng ?
 Of all those hearts 'tis only thine and mine
 That feel a thrill of sympathy divine—
That, answering, break into a voiceless song.
Spirit of music ! poised on rainbow wings
 That flash in iridescent harmony—
 Thy very breath incipient melody—
Behold us, blind and deaf to earthly things ;

This is the moment,—stretch a hand to each,
And with a touch unseal each lonely heart,
So shall our spirits no more live apart,
But a more blessed sphere together reach,
Of quickened understanding, mutual love,
Of pure unearthly longings satisfied,
And perfect happiness, so long denied.
So, when the sounds that drew our souls above
Shall cease, and angels drop the mystic screen
That hath been lifted for a blissful hour
By music's sweet and superhuman power,
But yet must hang our world and theirs between —
Then shall our spirits, thine and mine, return
To earth, and lo ! dwell separate once more,
But, each with secret joy, unknown before,
Remembering how the other once did burn ;
How the same thoughts awoke and lingered,—loth
To die when that which had aroused them died,
Remembering, with a glow of tender pride,
The lovely message that once came to both.

*THE PRINCESS'S FAREWELL TO
ST. GEORGE.*

FAREWELL, my love ! my Prince ! 'tis not for me
To offer thee the guerdon of my heart—
Not mine the blessed fate with life to pay
The debt I owe thee ; thou must e'en depart—
And I must wait with longing for that day
When all such debts are cancelled openly.

I weep, but have no pity on my tears,
They are unworthy of my faith, and thee ;
Look not so kindly on me—I am weak—
And have not learnt the sweet serenity—
The tender confidence, withal so meek—
That thou hast taught me each true Christian wears.

So let me speak—the memory of the past
With a strong tide doth carry me along

And overwhelms the sting of present pain—
The visions of that time do crowd and throng—
I seem to hear myself condemned again
To die,—the lot had fallen on me at last.

'Tis like a dream, the terror of that day,
When, though I deemed myself prepared for death,
The sight of those who roused me, while they wept,
And laid stern hands upon me, choked my breath,
And made me wonder how I could have slept
The precious hours of my last night away.

My father clung with piteous hands to mine,
And cried, "This is the last of all my race!"
But they made answer, "We are fathers too—
Lo! in each home there is an empty place;
The awful lot has sanctioned what we do—
Why should the only heart unscathed be thine?"

And so they led me forth without the gate,
And left me there, like one already dead
But yet unburied,—and I shed no tears.
I heard my maidens weeping as they fled

Lest any shriek of mine should reach their ears ;
But crowds of courtiers stayed to watch my fate.

My figure was the point on which all eyes
Were bent ; from every roof, from every tower,
The citizens who loved me prayed for me ;
But there was safety in th' eleventh hour,—
My eyes, imploring Heaven, did light on thee,
Just as the monster saw his helpless prize.

Before me stretched the marsh, the beast's abode,
Filled with his countless victims' rotting bones
Within an hour my sepulchre to be.
But ah ! thy horse's footfall on the stones
Echoed thy cry of " Courage ! " on to me—
Speeding towards me on the city road.

That moment I could little heed the speech
Thou madest me ; as, ere the beast drew near,
While yet his body curled among the reeds,
Thou didst dismount, without a sign of fear,
And to thy God didst pray for both our needs—
Kneeling together on the treacherous beach.

Then with a smile and proudly lifted head,
In my own language thou didst bid me trace
The legend graven on thy shield of steel :—
“ Fear not, Princess, the power of God’s grace
Upholdeth me, for lo ! ‘ *Beneath thy heel*
The lion and the dragon shalt thou tread.’ ”

If it were not for this I had not borne
To see thee enter on the hopeless task
In which so many knights had failed before ;
But my consent thou didst not wait to ask,
For, leaping on thy charger’s back once more,
Thy sword, cross-hilted, was already drawn.

I dare not think upon the actual fight
Between the horrid beast and thee, my love ;
My people’s gods seemed powerless to aid—
I could but raise my heart and eyes above
And think upon thy words, “ My God hath
said” . . .

While all were gazing on the dreadful sight.

Then suddenly they flung the city gate
Wide open, with a wild exulting shout,

And, as I looked, behold the beast lay slain,
And the mad populace came streaming out,
My father feebly tottering in their train,
To welcome the great champion of my fate.

But thou, with silent courtesy, didst turn
From their approach, and, smiling in my face,
Saidst, " Princess, thank the God Who answers
prayer
With me, and He will show thee yet more grace" ;
And once again we knelt together there
Among the reeds, and all my soul did burn.

Then I was fain for joy to weep aloud,
As through the city streets they led me home ;
There, at the palace steps, the human wave
Broke, and retired ; but, like scattered foam,
Some few still clung to me by love made brave—
Ah ! of such welcome I was justly proud.

But still more proud of thee, my glorious knight,
Who, with thy blood-stained sword unsheathed,
didst stand

Gazing abroad with deep mysterious eyes—
Still grasped by King Eusebius' trembling hand—
Transfigured by the light of sunset skies—
And with the cross upon thy breast still white.

'Tis only since th' entreaties of the King
Prevailed on thee to sojourn with us here,
That I have learnt the meaning of that sign,
True symbol of thy life, now doubly dear
To me ; henceforth thy blessed creed is mine,
Though to thy Lord a wounded heart I bring.

Thou who by us hast played an angel's part,
Thou who by works hast justified thy faith,
Thou whom our citizens would fain adore
For saving me, their future Queen, from death—
I for my soul's new life do bless thee more—
And so farewell, my saint, in peace depart.

MY NEIGHBOUR'S ROSE.

YONDER, within my neighbour's garden-fence,
There cherished grew, and grows,
Carefully guarded from all outward ills,
A glorious, crimson rose.

One day I saw its beauty quite by chance,
And gazed with burning eyes,
And stretch'd out longing hands to it, alas !
It was too dear a prize.

And ever as I gazed with yearning sore,
(Would I had also feared !)
And ever as it blossomed more and more
Full sharper thorns appeared.

But yet the spell upon me made control
Wax harder day by day,

And still the passion grew within my soul,
I *could* not turn away.

At last, though trembling at my own advance,
I broke through hedge and fence,
And realised for once in life's expanse
The fulness of each sense.

With panting breath, and arms upraised, I press'd
The crimson blossoms close—
The fragrance on my lips—and in my breast
The vengeance of the rose.

That moment I was heedless of the smart,
My joy was too complete—
But now the wounds are festering in my heart. . . .
Ah, me ! but it was sweet !

SONNET.

(“To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”)

O BLESSED certainty ! Who would refuse
The dreadful death of infamy and shame,
If, with the suffering, such assurance came—
Nay, would not rather such a passing choose ?
It is the future's dread uncertainty
That even faithful saints at times must feel—
That makes them often tremble as they kneel
And pray, “In death, good Lord, deliver me.”
But knowing Christ's dear love, and all He bore,
And all His knowledge of the human heart,
We may believe that then, if not before,
Ere He doth bid a holy soul depart,
The actual promise spoken to the thief
Will soothe all fears into a glad relief.

A REVIVAL.

A MOTHER and child lay side by side,
Dead in the flush of youth and pride—
Tenants for long of my house and room ;
Spirits now of the outer gloom.

I laid white roses about their feet,
And covered the features still and sweet—
Yet, while I wept full bitterly,
My heart did sing for liberty.

Now I was free to come and go,
To taste the pleasures that all men know—
In a silent grave my dead would lie
And none would know it, but they—and I.

I stooped to kiss them a long farewell,
And how it happened I cannot tell,
But life flushed back into each pale face,
And mother and child arose in their place.

The mother is Love, and the child is Pain ;
And now they are both alive again—
And, woe is me, Pain groweth so fast
'Twill reach the stature of Love at last.

LOCK AND KEY.

My heart was locked, and I had lost the key—

Imprisoned thus were all my hopes and fears,
And had been so (or so it seemed to me)

For years.

Sorrow had shut the door with so much force,

I deemed all effort vain from either side
To open it, so left each in its course

Untried.

Nothing could quicken now my languid breath,

Or stir my blood, or rouse my interest—
All that I feebly wished for was my death
At best.

Without—the world was all one hueless grey ;
Friends spoke—I heeded nothing that was said ;
With a locked heart one might be far away,
Or dead.

When suddenly I met a little child—
It gazed on me with eyes most pitying,
And said, in accents very low and mild,
“ ’Tis spring.”

It laid its little hand within my own
And led me out, through fields, into the wood,
Then left me—having near me on a stone
Placed food.

Now as I sat deep silence wrapped me round—
I grew aware of spring’s delicious dawn,
And, out of silence, dim mysterious sound
Was born.

Nature herself drew near adown the glade ;
With flowers wreathed upon her floating hair
She came to me—in likeness of a maid
Most fair.

And, bending low, "Poor soul," she said, "Behold,
 I have a key that will unlock thy heart ;
In blessed peace, such as thou knew'st of old,
 Depart."

Then, at the words, the stubborn gates gave way ;
 Affections woke that had been dead for years,
And issued forth into the light of day
 With tears.

The world was all transfigured in my sight ;
 I ate and drank, then knelt upon the sod,
And, with wet eyes turned upwards to the light,
 Praised God.

MY TREASURE.

TENDERLY draw aside the silken folds—

There, in the still mysterious recess

Enter, and, with great awe and fearfulness,
Worship, as he needs must who thus beholds.

See, on the pedestal above men's height

The figure, clad in jealous drapery

Of some celestial, subtle napery,

With pinions that in feathers veil their might ;

With hands and arms outstretch'd—yet not to thee—

With eyes uplifted far beyond thy range

In concentrated gaze of import strange,

And mouth compressed in sweet solemnity.

Yet look again—those eyes that seem to gaze
Are vacant orbs, there is a hue of death
O'er all the face, there is no eager breath
To stir the breast the attitude displays.

The perfect form is Love's embodiment,
And, standing silent at th' Olympian gates,
In supplicating majesty awaits
The gift of life, immortal supplement.

This is my treasure—all that I am worth—
This wondrous creature living without breath,
Whose life will be the signal of my death—
If that is death, when spirits leave this earth,

Absorbed in one consuming ecstasy,
No longer tread the sod in mortal frames,
But, as the many-coloured joyous flames,
In one great Fire merge identity.

Awake, O Love, and bless thy longing slave,
Possessor still, and yet by thee possessed—
The kingdom of my heart is all unrest,
Thus do I open wide the gates, and crave

Thee to accept the loyal sovereignty—

Lo ! I am waiting—till I see thee move

And step down from thy niche, O mighty Love,
To touch me in a dread affinity.

Lo ! I am waiting here to see thine eyes

Like falling stars from Heaven to earth descend

And light on me before thee as I bend,
Full of the glory of the far-off skies.

Lo ! I am waiting here to hear the voice

For which I listen through the world's discord,

Which, one great day, will sever with a sword
Of sweetness soul from flesh, saying, " Rejoice ! "

LUX IN TENEBRIS.

IF it might be so, yet I would not choose

That this my "light" should pour a dazzling flame

But still it is a blessed simile to use—

And I am glad thou gav'st it this new name.

Others may hold their shining gifts on high

To flood the hidden corners of the heart,

Unseal each private thought, unmask each sigh,

And conquer nature with consummate art.

But my small light has no such mission here ;

'Tis but a faint reflection at the best

Of lights now shining in another sphere—

An after-glow of sunset in the west—

A gentle, flickering firelight on the walls.

When the tired soul is sunk in reverie,
When all the air is full of voiceless calls,
And earthly sounds are hushed in sympathy—

Then, on the gloom that soon would turn to night,
A little light springs out, and dances higher,
Leading the weary eyes with grave delight
To seek its birthplace in a heart of fire.

'Tis the most homely of all lights—alone
The firelight dreamer sits in calm content,
And pictures faces that have come and gone—
Tracing with clearer eyes God's deep intent.

Full many a problem that hath vexèd sore
All through the heat and turmoil of the day,
When faced upon the silent hearth once more,
Unravels slowly, and then melts away.

In pain of body, or in time of grief,
One shrinks from lamp or candle's chilling glare—
The wounded spirit knows its best relief,
Seeks out the friendly fire, and crouches there.

A blessed gift, such light ! May it be mine
To shed a little brightness on life's cares,
In hours of darkness faithfully to shine,
Smooth out hard frowns, and sparkle in sad tears ;

So shall my gift its highest use attain,
Until this time of darkness shall be past ;
So shall one talent other talents gain,
And yield a blessed usury at last.

SONNET.

(" DIEU ET MON DROIT.")

I.

" DISHEARTENED ? " Ah ! not yet—although thine ears
Are full of cries and groans importunate,
Warring with sorrows that accumulate
And lie too deep for woman's weakness—tears ;
Weary of fruitless efforts, sick with fears
Of duties left undone, beneath the weight
Of unshared troubles left most desolate,
Still God is not unmindful of thy prayers.
Courage, brave heart ! pursuing still, though faint,
Thy *best* the Master looks for, not *success* ;
God slowly fashioneth the perfect saint,
And, above all, doth try his steadfastness.
Uphold thy sacred right through toil and pain,
Take for thy watchword " God," and fight again.

SONNET.

("THE CONTINUAL DEW OF THY BLESSING.")

II.

"DISHEARTENED?" Ah! not yet—each hour that flies

Doth bear petitions Heavenward for thee

And every member of God's ministry

Wherever Christians bow beneath the skies :

This is a thought thy soul may duly prize ;

The blessed promise made to "two or three"

Cementing the great bond of unity,

And bidding thee with hope renewed arise.

Such hours of weariness the Saviour knew—

Nay, o'er His wandering sheep He groaneth yet—

And thou, who fain wouldst rescue but a few,

The cost of such a joy must not forget.

Thou shalt be strengthened with the Heavenly dew

Meanwhile, in sweet repayment of the debt.

SWEETEST EYES.

A PAIR of absent-minded, grey-blue eyes
That shed upon the world a pained surprise,
A sort of shrinking sense, "Lord, who am I?"
Yet eyes that burn with indignation's flame,
A loving wrath at sight of sin and shame
More eloquent by far than loudest cry.

Eyes that do shine across the careless throng
Like two pure angels who do not belong
To earth, nor bear earth's stamp of vanity ;
Who, wandering day by day the crowd among,
Seeking lost lambs, and sick with shame and wrong,
Flee back at night to sweet security.

Eyes that are full of hidden wealth of love
Which overflows on children, springs above
The height of little dark or golden heads,

And softly falls in blessed summer showers
On little hearts like open daisy-flowers
That lift it back in their pure chalices.

Eyes that reflect the immortality
Of that with which God blessed humanity,
The soul, that shall revive dead flesh one day ;
Eyes that shall then awake from dreams of night,
Rekindled into still more glorious light,
Which naught will ever dim or chase away.

And when I stand (such grace to me being given)
And watch the white-robed saints pass into Heaven,
And, one by one, loved figures recognise,
Then in that blest procession one shall turn
And gaze on me till all my spirit burn—
And I shall see again, and know, those eyes.

A BEAUTIFUL MOUTH.

WHAT is a beautiful mouth ?

One that is firm and straight ?

A jealously-guarded gate

Through which few words may pass,

Words that have lingered too long within—

Like idle triflers with shame and sin—

And come forth poisoned, alas !

They wound, those arrows of fire,

Shot by an archer dire

From the bow of a beautiful mouth.

What is a beautiful mouth ?

One that is round and small

Like the cherry on the wall

That has ripened over soon ?

Tempting to those who only see—
Yet a cherry is tasteless fruit to me
In the heat of a weary noon ;
Too fresh, too young, too sour,
It lacks restoring power—
The childish beautiful mouth.

What is a beautiful mouth ?
One that is curved and bent
In a sweep magnificent,
As Grecians modelled of old ?
Full of the warmest tints of life,
With subtle glamour and passion rife—
Those lotus-lips unfold—
Too dangerously fair
In a life of toil and care—
'Tis *only* a beautiful mouth.

What is a beautiful mouth ?
One that is tender to all,
Yet firm and brave withal
To soothe, or bear, sore pains.

One where beauty is never missed,
One that sorrow has gently kissed,
One where charity reigns.
The heart's interpreter,
A blessed comforter
Is such a beautiful mouth.

Hath a saint a beautiful mouth ?
Who cares, when the voice speaks low
Of freedom from sin and woe,
Leading the listener's soul
On wings of love to Heavenly heights,
In wider and ever-lengthening flights,
Till the earth in space doth roll.
The mouth that can express
Such thoughts of loveliness
Must be a beautiful mouth.

WILD ROSES.

EVENING breezes, softly rising

Kissed the fevered Earth, and spread
Coolness, life, and hope, reviving
Flowers the sun had left for dead ;

Carried sounds like distant chiming

O'er the plains and forests vast ;
And from honeysuckle climbing
Shook down sweetness as they passed.

Thoughts and eyes both raised to Heaven,

Tramping down the dusty lane—
Grieved—yet all my wrongs forgiven,
Sore—yet heedless of the pain—

Came a sudden, envious corner—
Rounded hedge that hid my view—
Passing on with hurried footsteps,
My tired eyes encountered—you !

O my Love ! then, and for ever !
In my memory she stands
As she stood that Summer evening
With wild roses in her hands.

All unconscious of my gazing—
Hearing not my weary tread,
Busied with her sweet marauding,—
She nor paused nor turned her head.

How I watched her lay together
Buds and blossoms, pink and white,
Flower by flower the hedge's treasure,
In most innocent delight.

Eager grown, she tried still higher,
Tip-toe reaching—but in vain—
Trying still to catch the brier
Which danced lightly back again.

Then my stronger arm uplifted,
Ere she knew me at her side,
Took the waving branches captive—
Bent and broke their blushing pride ;

Till I filled her arms with fragrance,
Murmuring low apologies,—
She, with head and lashes drooping,
Smiled, but dared not meet my eyes.

Ambush'd thorns had wreaked their vengeance
And my hand was stained with blood ;
But my Love's eyes pierced me deeper—
Raised in sweet solicitude. . . .

She was but a country maiden—
She to whom I vowed my life ;
Would you blame me ? Come and see her,—
Let us go to meet my wife.

S O N N E T.

("CLOUDS.")

I.

To one in trouble.

THE mountain's crest is ever veiled in cloud ;
And, though with steadfast feet the climber draw
Nearer the heights that in his dreams he saw,
His goal attained, still deeper is the shroud.
Alone, and far above the wondering crowd,
Enwrapped by clouds of mystery and awe,
The holy Moses learnt sublimer law
And nearest to his Maker was allowed.
So thou, ascending rapidly to heights
Of faith and purity, though worn with pain,
And beckoning to the dwellers of the plain
To loose their clinging bonds and vain delights
And follow, doth thyself point out the way.
Entering deeper clouds from day to day.

SONNET.

(“CLOUDS.”)

II.

MINE eyes are dim—the clouds about thy way
Are not more blinding than my pitying tears ;
Yet pride should rather drive away such fears,
Which can but cause me dangerous delay.
Toil on, dear heart—clouds that to me look grey
Do but conceal the nearness of thy God,
Thy path is one the blessed Saviour trod,
And with such certainty how shouldst thou stray ?
Earth and its joys are now so far below,
What matter if the mists should roll between ?
Sweetest communion thou wouldst never know
Without this isolation, sent to wean
God's best-loved children. After thou hast striven
Light dawns, and lo ! there are no clouds in Heaven.

SONNET.

(" WHITE AND RED.")

ALL white and red the flowers I bring to-day—
The Church's colours from all time—thus meet
Thee with true Easter messages to greet,
And the sweet parable of life convey.
The water of God's grace, that can allay
All aching disappointment, feverish heat,
And wash the clinging dust from toil-worn feet
That still press onward in the narrow way,
Doth find its type in flowers so purely white ;
And in the red, the perfect Sacrifice
In which all lives self-sacrificed unite,
The Blood once shed to pay the ransom price.
God grant thee, in a mystery adored,
To drink the mingled chalice of the Lord.

A VOICE.

My child was dying : and in the room

Two spirits stood watching him, side by side

A voice said suddenly, through the gloom,

“The Lord hath need of him,” and I cried

“Amen,” though my wave of anguish broke . . .

But lo ! ’twas the Angel of Life that spoke.

THE LABOURER.

(“One soweth, and another reapeth.”—St. John iv. 37.)

THERE is a field upon a bleak hillside
Wherein, long years ago, in the chill glare
Of noon I watched one toil with patient care.
The ground was stony, hardened, over-dried,
Yet day by day still saw the labourer there ;
And not one tithe of effort did he spare
Till all the hill was furrowed far and wide.

And ever as I turned my wondering eyes
Towards the hill, the winter changed to spring
And in their nests the birds began to sing
Their welcome to the year in sweet surprise.
Then, by a long experience made wise,
The sower with a skilful hand did fling
The precious seed, and round on eager wing
Hovered a crowd of feathered enemies.

And by-and-bye the sun shed fiercer heat—

O'er the brown earth there spread a shade of
green—

Yet sheltering trees were few and far between ;

Upon the labourer the sunrays beat

Like blows, and wounded him from head to feet ;

But hard at work, as ever, he was seen

Keeping the young plants pure and fresh and clean,

As though the toil to him were rest and meat.

Then storms arose, and sudden showers of rain

Poured down alike on fertile fields and bare,

By very zeal destroying here and there,

Beating the tender plants to earth again.

The labourer, though drenched, did not complain,

But still I watched him moving everywhere,

Raising the drooping plants with the sweet care

Of nurses on a battlefield of pain.

The thunder-clouds rolled by ; the summer sun

Descended slowly from his golden throne ;

The autumn winds drew nearer, making moan,

And the fair month of harvest had begun.

And now, I thought, the labourer's task is done,
For, clothed in ripened grain, the hillside shone;
But lo! my unknown, well-known friend was gone;
I sought him—and the shock had power to stun.

The sound of sharpening sickle met my ears,
And shouts of those who gloried in the prize,
Who reaped and sang and filled the air with cries—
Sounds that to me at first brought only tears.
Was this the end of all his hopes and fears?—
His work—I watched with such admiring eyes
That his tall figure, dark against the skies,
Stands pictured in my mind through all these years.

Many since then have sowed and reaped again,
Forgetful of the one who toiled alone
And made the virtue of the land his own—
(For from that time the field yields richer grain);
Could he but see the fruit of all his pain—
The women, sick with care and cares to come,
Weeping for joy at every harvest-home—
He would not deem his labour spent in vain.

It is God's will that I must wait to know
When, and in what, he reaped his full reward ;
For that he surely reaped I trust the Lord,
Who upon every worker doth bestow
A crown of satisfaction here below,
And unto him whom men do least applaud,
One day a higher blessing shall accord,
Remembering at harvest who did sow.

SONNET.

(“They say unto Him, We are able.”—St. Matt. xx. 22.)

“LORD, we are able !” Earnest answering cry !

Not in the winning of the martyr’s crown,

But by the natural human will laid down,

With all a leader’s dread anxiety,

And all a sufferer’s despondency,

Sick with deferrèd hopes, and patience tried—

’Twas thus th’ Apostle’s flesh was crucified,

And thus thou sufferest with like constancy.

This is the baptism thy Lord allows,

And this the love that He will best reward—

Love that will *earn* what grace cannot accord,

Will prove thereby what else were empty vows,

And rest at length, all longing satisfied,

In special nearness to the Saviour’s side.

LOVE POEMS.

LOVE'S HUMILITY.

BEHOLD, O Love, my voice on hearing thine

Doth sink and falter in a breathless pause—

Fain would I speak—and yet what words are mine ?

My silence now will better plead my cause.

Before those gentle eyes that look me through

My own, abashed, must lower helpless shields ;

Gone is the strength of will that once I knew,

As at a single look my spirit yields.

While seeing thee in all thy beauty stand

On equal ground with me—it is more meet

That I should kneel to touch thy proffered hand,

And thus prostrate myself at thy dear feet.

But not my body only is abased,
My heart doth fail me at the thought of thee
And whispers all my confidence misplaced—
Love trembling at its own temerity.

And, lastly, at the glimpse of thy pure soul,
Invisible—although perceived by mine,
Both deathless spirits while the ages roll—
One holy, and one stained, yet both divine—

Before the beauty of thy holiness
On which the angels gaze admiringly,
My very soul bows down in lowliness,
And praises God Who made both it and thee.

ONLY LOVE.

(“Only love—that is not worth much.”)

“ONLY love—it is of little value.”

He who passeth up the mountain road
Seeks perchance the wondrous “*Himmels-blüme*”

In its wild mysterious abode—
Though he doubt the legend of its beauty,
Lured by flowers of every shade of blue—
Asking confirmation from each stranger—
Till at last he prove the story true.

But when once he hath procured the treasure,
And hath revelled in its light awhile,
’Tis a chance if he doth not reject it—
Watch it fading with contemptuous smile—
And declare to any passing friend
That such trouble was not worth such end.

Is my love worth more than fading blossom
Pleasing to the eye a little space ?
Ah ! the mountaineer who stoops to gather
Flowers, must needs delay his steady pace,
Therefore unadorned his cap remains,
Till, alone, the highest peak he gains.

Love is like a skylark, singing sweetly,
Caught and tamed, but with a fettered wing ;
Though it please, it is of little value,
Whatsoever betide it can but sing ;
Patience with the bird—it lives for thee—
Feed it, and 'twill sing most soothingly.

Love is like a diamond, many-sided,
Flashing crimson—which is mother's love,
Blue—the paler love of child for parents,
Gold—the friendship that is sealed above ;
But the purest and most brilliant white
Is the love in which all loves unite.

This white stone I give thee—take it, wear it,
Hide it carefully,—or pass it by,

None the less it now is mine no longer,
And must so remain until I die—
Only love !—an angel wears no gem—
But wilt thou my love as such condemn ?

Is it truly of such little value ?

Flowers, however beautiful, must fade,
Singing birds, alas ! will die, neglected,
Jewels will not sparkle in the shade ;
Yet my love, though sadly poor and small,
Doth include myself, my life, my all.

THE PORTRAIT OF MY LOVE.

YES, it is a lovely picture,
Very sweet and very fair,
But it lacks the living colours
In the eyes and in the hair.

You may well admire the portrait—
You who did not know the face ;
Doubtless in your eyes the painter
Has excelled himself in grace.

But you never watched those sweet lips
Parting in a glad surprise,
And a smile light up the features
Painted here so grave and wise.

Have you ever stood and waited
Underneath a cold dark sky,
Gazing at a curtained window—
Longing, fearing to draw nigh?

Have your eyes, perchance, been dazzled
By the sudden flood of light
Which, when someone raised the curtain,
Streamed into the outer night?

I have stood before her often,
Speaking half unconsciously—
Gazing on her downcast lashes,
Ah! maybe too earnestly.

Then, when silence fell, I faltering
At the lack of her replies—
She would dazzle me by raising
The fringed curtains of her eyes.

No, I never told my darling
How I loved her; yet beneath
All my words a current meaning
May have reached her, like a breath—

Like the scent of hidden violets,
Or the far-off sound of birds ;
But the story of my passion
Never spoilt itself in words.

As the world would time our friendship,
Two short years had barely fled,
Ere her angel-wings unfolded—
Ere they told me she was dead.

She had seen Death waiting for her
Long before she met with me—
He had warned her not to linger,
So she passed on steadfastly.

Just before she died, she whispered,
“It was best it happened so—
Give him something, please—my picture—
He will value it, I know.”

By the artist's wondrous power
She, an angel now above,
Night and day is ever present
Watching me with eyes of love.

You may well admire the picture,
Which to you is full of grace ;
Yet to me 'tis but the shadowed
Beauty of my darling's face.

THE LILY OF LOVE.

(A SONG.)

I SAW my love in a dream last night,

Oh ! vision, passing sweet !

The rose of love and the lily of love

Bloomed at her head and feet.

She lay, as a maid of old degree

Lieth on couch of stone,

And far and wide as the eye could see

The world was ours alone.

I stooped to gather the crimson rose,

When lo ! a Third did stand

Between, and with a voiceless sign

Bent down and stayed my hand.

“Not so,” the Spirit said, and sighed,

“This flower is not for thee ;

Pluck yonder lily, and wear instead

Its thornless purity.”

I woke with the sting of present pain,

The vision had passed away :

I must begin my life again

With only a lily-spray.

TO A CERTAIN MAID.

How will ye look, O gentle grey-blue eyes,
When once the veil of maiden innocence
Is lifted, and thus gazing in mine own,
Ye understand their loving reverence—
The Passion-secret that is yours alone—
And read it with a tremulous surprise?

How wilt thou bleed, O tender generous heart,
At the sad impotence of my poor soul
Behind the bars of silence looking out,
As moments—hours—their lengthening torture roll,
Wild with its longing, sickened with its doubt,
Till Life itself stands ready to depart !

How wilt thou ring, O thrilling, well-known voice,
Down all the scale of feeling, till thou touch
The lowest note that into silence dies—

That wordless silence which conveys so much—

And wrapped in which my own soul's harmonies
Lie waiting but the whispered word "Rejoice"!

How wilt thou tremble, purest, sweetest maid,

To feel the dumb imploring of my hands

When I can wait no longer for that word!

Ah! surely thou wilt yield when Love demands!

Speak! for already thou hast seen and heard,—
Thou knowest all—and nature is obeyed!

WHAT ?

IF, instead of the calm hand stretched in greeting,
The calm words uttered, calm eyes raised to yours,
I were to fall before you on our meeting,
As men have fallen before a saint, entreating
A single word of love to heal their sores—
As sin-sick souls have bent to win the blessing
For which their parchèd lips refused to pray—
What, of your mercy, would you do, beloved ?
What, of your tender pity, would you say ?

If, instead of the face you know me wearing,
The casual smile, the cold, unlightened eyes,
You were to see the torments I am bearing
Reflected—as a lurid glow declaring
Fire beneath it is reflected in the skies ;

Before such evidence of human weakness,
Consumed by flames that brook no long delay—
What, of your wisdom, would you do, beloved?
What, in such passionate presence, would you say?

If, instead of the voice that sounds sedately,
Carefully tuned and set to moderate speech,
You were to catch the echo, strung innately
To wildest harmony, and stifled straightway,
Lest deeper notes the listener's ear should reach,
And, hearing, feel your own sweet heart replying,
"Despair no more, poor soul,—rejoice, rejoice!"—
What actual words, O love, would soothe my crying?
What answer would you make to such a voice?

If, instead of a unit among many
Acquaintances that gather at your side,
Received with equal words and smiles, if any,
(As in the parable each man his penny)
And in politeness only not denied,

You were to see how far I stood removèd
By virtue of my passion from such friends—
What would you do in your remorse, belovèd,
Knowing that you alone could make amends ?

A PASSER-BY.

I WALKED upon a shore of loneliness ;
The gloomy presence of the curling waves
That sport like ghouls over so many graves,
Re-echoing their sound of hollowness,
(Itself a mockery) unheeded—and yet felt.
And ever as I mused with downcast face
And vague intent, dim outlines I must trace,
Two hearts, that on the lying sand in one did melt.

When suddenly some magnet from above
Drew up my eyes, and for a second's space
I met my Lady walking, face to face.
The second passed, and with it passed my Love—

A motion only of grave friendliness,
And one bright smile left shining down the air,
That just before had seemed so cold and bare,
Now stirring with the flutter of her dress.

But oh ! the light on earth, and sea, and sky !
The waves plashed merrily like lambs at play,
The leaden clouds seemed now a soft clear grey,
The omen of the shifting sand no lie !
A blessed halo over all was cast ;
And one who met me later saw the change
Reflected in my face—Why call it strange ?
Why wonder?—'Twas my heart's delight who passed.

THREE VISITANTS.

ONE day when Spring made all things new,

And June forget-me-nots did strew

A broken copy of the sky above,

Beside the stream my footsteps stray'd,

And there, among the blossoms laid,

With wings unfledged, I found a baby Love.

I cradled it upon my heart,

I vowed that I would never part

With this my living treasure—Heaven-sent ;

The downy feathers grew apace,

And one day, smiling in my face,

The baby kissed my tearful eyes—and went.

A space—if years I cannot know—

Dragged on ; the Summer brooded low

Once more upon the parch'd though teeming earth.

Far down the fields a Youth I saw,

And watched him, with a trembling awe,

Approach and greet me with a cry of mirth.

Oh ! beautiful ! He stayed beside

Many a day of blessed pride,—

And if I feared the Winter coming on

“I shall be with thee,” he would cry,

“The bitterest winter I defy—

Thou shalt not bear those weary storms alone.”

And yet—when Summer drew away,

I saw, with terrible dismay,

The shadow fall and dim Love's eager eye;

His wings hung listless,—then he died,

And pallid lay on the hillside . . .

. . . And so I buried him—and did not die.

My heart was full of emptiness,

My life sank down for weariness,

And Time drew out a lengthening chain of years ;
I was unconscious,—till again
My soul grew hardened to the pain,
And I forgot to think of him with tears.

And when my cloud away had roll'd,
Autumn arose from seas of gold
And sat aloft upon a burnished throne,
While I behind the reapers crept
Along the golden lanes they swept,
And sought to warm my spirit in the sun.

Suddenly from the brazen skies
Sank to the level of my eyes
A god-like Being,—sheath'd each dazzling wing,
And stood. I fell upon my face,
But he assisted me with grace
And gently smiled at my dumb worshipping.

* * * * *

The other two, though wondrous fair,
Were given into my poor care,

But this last visitant, more awful still,
Has with a word revived my soul
And swept me under his control—
Has claimed and won my all, my life, my will.

Shall I be left alone once more ?

Will it be now as twice before ?

Then sure will death and parting mean the same ;
Winter doth bring no visitor,
The wounded heart remaineth sore
Until earth covers it for very shame.

This third and last doth hold me yet,
But if this sun should coldly set,
Stern Winter will receive an easy prey.
Stay, glorious one ! I am thy slave—
I shall lie down within my grave
That moment thou dost wing thy flight away.

A WELCOME.

How shall I welcome my lady best?—

My garden is cold and bare,
The wind blows chill from the drear north-west,
The swallow has sought her warmer nest—
And the dead leaves everywhere.

I have raised each sunflower's dying head,
To meet my lady's smile,
And swept the path for her feet to tread,
And watered the mignonette that shed
Such fragrance once awhile.

But, alas ! I have no passionate rose,
No lilies for her hair,
No mossy bank for her repose,
No nightingales to chant sweet woes—
My garden is cold and bare.

Yet she will come, I know full well,
With eyes that seek for mine,
With hurrying steps her thoughts impel—
With words—ah ! these I cannot tell—
But the voice will sound divine.

What matter if the ground be strown
With summer's faded flowers ?
This heart of mine—yet more her own—
Can, in its welcome, still atone
For desolated bowers.

And she will read in my burning eyes
The joy I could ne'er express,
The deep humility, sweet surprise,
And the passion of love that underlies,
For her dear loveliness.

This is my welcome ; no need to care
If flowers be scarce or late ;
And, once my lady is present there
My garden will be for ever fair,
And the very weeds consecrate.

WORDS.

O WRETCHED tongue ! Behold, thou hast betrayed
And ruined me, thy master—yea, and made
My whole weak body subject to thy will—
Hast spoken, when in vain I urged “be still.”
Would that love’s fire had scorch’d thee, as the sun
Doth scorch untimely fruit ! This mischief done
Will need such great repair ’twill be my fate
The fatal words with life to expiate ;
Life spent in sad fulfilment of the vow
Never again to speak as I but now
Have spoken—never once to breathe the word
Which mortal ears (hers least) should ne’er have
heard :
Only to live, that so each simplest deed
May prove my promise worthy of some heed ;
Silent to die, if dying I may prove
The all-enduring power of faithful love.

THUS FAR.

It was the hour when human flesh must rest,
But when the soul of man is doubly free ;
The prison-doors are opened noiselessly,
And none the issuing captive may molest.

My spirit wandered out into the night,
And followed down the path she knew so well,
Until she reached the place where thou dost dwell,
And saw thy spirit standing, clad in white.

What was it made thee seem so purely pale,
And shed unearthly light upon thy face,
Invested all thy form with nameless grace,
Yet made my yearning spirit shrink and quail ?

Awe-struck she gazed, and nearer still did creep
With hands outstretched to touch thy garments'
fold,
But suddenly a shaft of piercing cold
Struck . . . and I felt the tremor through my
sleep.

Had it been fire that hung a sheet of flame
Between—half-awful, half-enticing—she had dared
To thrust imploring hands through all, nor cared
If all her life were branded e'en to shame.

But, mocking in its clear transparency
Her groping touch, her eyes all blind with tears,
(Whilst thou remained unconscious of her prayers)
A wall of Ice arose 'twixt her and thee.

WAITING.

WAITING, dear love, to-morrow's happy meeting,
I count the hours to see thy face again,
To touch thy hand, and hear thy voice of greeting—
The only passing respite from my pain.

But after all, alas! I have no token
That others may not share the very smile
That lights on me,—that words as sweetly spoken
Will not delight their ears within a while.

I still must wait for love, that, were it given,
For very sweetness would arrest my breath
And ere my time translate me into Heaven—
So I must even also wait for death.

However long the path there is a turning

That leads straight onward through the awful gate;
And, once within, cool hands will soothe the burning
Of weary hearts that shall have learnt to wait.

Waiting, dear love, till that most blessed morrow,
When into sunlight all earth's vapours roll ;
I will lie down in peace begot of sorrow
And dream of holy converse—soul with soul.

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